

## **An Appeal to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra**

1. With the objective to make the Godavri & Krishna and their tributaries free from pollution completely and permanently within 5 years in Maharashtra, a high-powered committee of proven ability and moral character under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister must be formed. Eminent scientists, environmentalists, and social activists of proven ability and moral character should be invited to the Committee. **Like National Ganga River Basin Authority ( NGRBA) of Govt. of India at the national level, Maharashtra must have a planning, financing, monitoring and coordinating high powered Maharashtra River Conservation Authority( MRCA) to insure effective abatement of pollution and conservation of its rivers through comprehensive holistic planning and management.**

2. **The policy of allowing treated municipality sewage or industrial effluents into our rivers is absolutely wrong in the contest of our country: it is anti common people (Aam Janata).**

**Industrial effluents, hospital wastes, treated or untreated, must not be allowed to enter into the rivers and must not also be allowed to mix with the sewage, which should be converted into valuable natural manure for organic farming. Industries must treat their effluents and use only the recycled water. Since our rivers are the source of drinking water for crores of our common people and also for the animals and STPs cannot convert sewage into potable water, sewage from the cities and towns, treated or untreated, must not also be allowed to enter into the rivers. Sewers must be separated from rivers and sewage must be converted into manure producing electricity in the process wherever possible.**

3. **Treatment of the sewage for converting it into natural manure through “Pond System” and “Plant Based Management of Sewage and Waste Treatment”, which are cheapest and durable and need least management and electricity, should be preferred wherever possible.**

A massive time-bound plantation programme on the banks of the Godavri & Krishna and their tributaries, along with the development of constructed wetlands for sewage treatment in major cities and towns on the banks of the rivers, should be undertaken with the help of NEERI, Nagpur, NBRI, Lucknow, I.I.T. Mumbai along with other prominent research centers of environmental science/ engineering from our universities/ colleges and various like-minded NGOs and local people. They should network and collaborate with each other to play the central role to clean the rivers within five years with the help of a culture of GPPP (Government, Private, and Public Participation.)

4. Entry of hazardous chemicals from agricultural run-off into the rivers must be prevented through promotion of organic farming in a massive way

5. There should be disincentives in the form of proper fines to the cities/towns in proportion to the quantity and quality of pollution a city/town has added to the river which flows through or near it. There should be a monitoring mechanism to regularly monitor the water quality of the rivers at the entry and exit points of each major polluting city/town.

6. **Environmental ethics should be taught as a part of the syllabus on ethics which must be taught as a compulsory subject, both at the school as well as at the college level.** Teaching environmental ethics without discussing various fundamental questions concerning moral and spiritual values, and the value and means of ethical life would be of little significance. Critical study of the views of great religions and of great

teachers and thinkers of mankind about various fundamental issues of ethics would be a major step in the direction to build the moral character of our society, without which it would not be possible for us to overcome our present deep rooted moral and spiritual crisis.

Let Maharashtra, the land of so many great saints and social reformers, provide the nation and through it to the world at large an example of an eco-friendly nonviolent culture of development with absolutely zero river pollution. **To begin with, let us make Pune, the cultural capital of Maharashtra, a perfectly river friendly city with zero river pollution.**

Protection of all the rivers and water bodies must be accorded highest priority in our development process. Ultimately, we must create a new paradigm of development for India based on Gandhian principles of Truth and non-violence. **In the Workshop 'held on the occasion of Punyatithi of Mahatma Gandhi on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2011, the above Demands were unanimously accepted.**

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